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INDIA BETTERS CHINA WITH MOST UNIVS

India's 148 universities featured in QS World University Rankings-Asia. They surpass China's 133 and Japan's 96. IIT-Bombay retained its status as the premier institution in the country. The second and third spots went to IIT-Delhi and IIT-Madras at the national level. Other Indian institutes in the top 100 in the QS Rankings 2024 include IISc- B'luru (58), IIT-Kharagpur (59), IIT-Kanpur (63) and Delhi University (94)

Nitish apologises; PM raps INDIA over remark

NCW seeks action, expunction of statement

RAMASHANKAR AND RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ Patna/Guna

A day after Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's graphical description of copulation in the state Assembly while explaining the state's drop in fertility rate drew national outrage, he offered his apology and walked back on his remarks on Wednesday. "If my words were wrong, I apologise. If anyone got hurt, I take back my words," Nitish told media persons.

Bihar CM Nitish Kumar speaks amid protests by opposition members in the Assembly on Wednesday | PTI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi led the blistering attack against Nitish without naming him at an election rally in Guna in poll-bound Madhya Pradesh. Claiming the remarks were extremely disrespectful to women, Modi said they came from the head of one of the allies of the Opposition INDIA bloc.

"But what was more shocking was that not a single word has been uttered by any other constituent of the INDIA bloc condemning it. How will people with such blurred vision ensure the respect and honour of women," he wondered.

In the state Assembly, BJP members created ruckus demanding the CM's resignation, forcing adjournment of the House. The situation was similar when Nitish went to the legislative council. It, too, had to be adjourned.

In Bihar, a complaint was lodged against Nitish's remarks in a Muzaffarpur court. It would be taken up for hearing on November 25. He has been booked under sections 354D (stalking), 504 (intentional insult), 505 (with intent to incite any class or community), 509 (intent to insult woman's modesty) of the Indian Penal Code and Section 67 of the IT Act.

The National Commission for Women (NCW) Chairperson Rekha Sharma, too, lashed out at Nitish, saying his statement was like a "dialogue from a C-grade movie."

The NCW chief demanded strong action from the Bihar Speaker against the chief minister.

In a letter to Bihar Speaker Awadh Bihari Choudhary, Sharma said, "The Commission strongly condemns and protests the use of such derogatory, vulgar statements made by persons holding responsible positions which shows extreme disrespect to women." Demanding that the Speaker expunge the remarks, Sharma said the worst part was that male MLAs sitting in the Assembly were laughing at it.

6 tmcft more Cauvery water for B'luru

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE state government has allocated an additional six tmcft of Cauvery water to Bengaluru for drinking purpose.

Currently, the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) is utilising 18 tmcft of Cauvery water. With this additional allocation, the state capital will get 24 tmcft of Cauvery water, according to a government order. However, according to BWSSB, it is currently utilising 19 tmcft of Cauvery water.

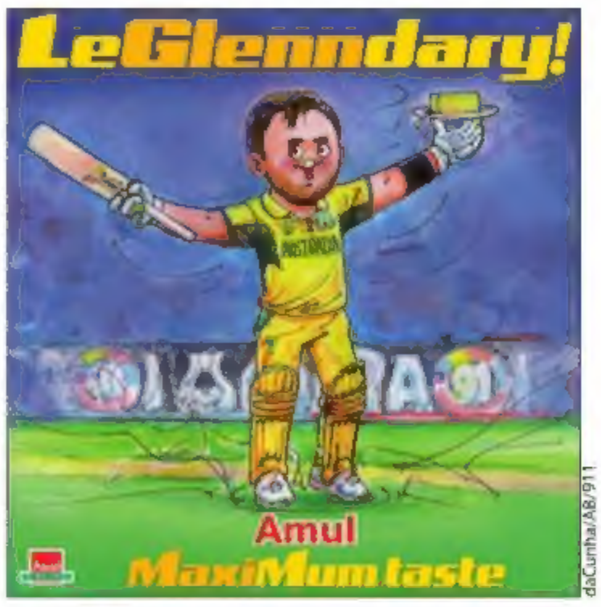
Deputy Chief Minister and Bengaluru Development Minister DK Shivakumar said that an order has been issued to reserve 24 tmcft of Cauvery water annually for drinking purpose in Bengaluru and its surrounding areas. In 2018, the Supreme Court stipulated that 24 tmcft of Cauvery water can be used for drinking purpose in Bengaluru. "No action was taken to utilise full 24 tmcft of Cauvery water. Now, we are planning to use 6 tmcft more for drinking purpose in the state capital," he added.

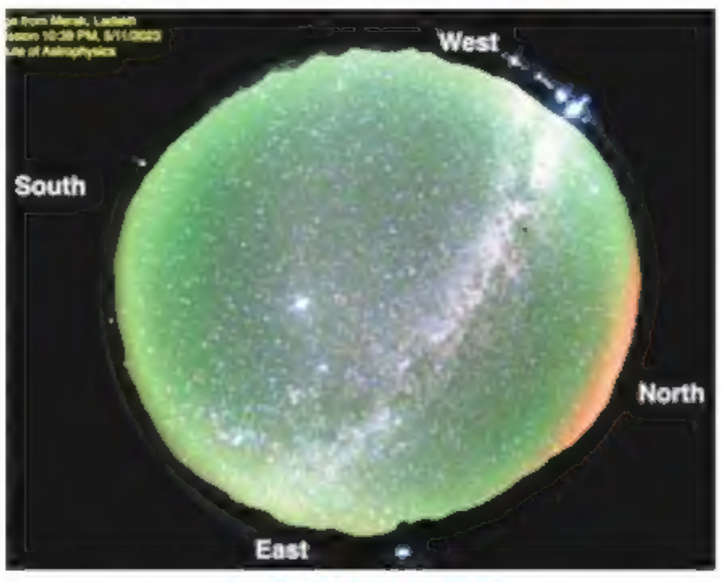
Shivakumar said providing drinking water is the government's priority and it is following the SC's direction. "Why should we give up our rights? We are following the SC direction and that much water will be reserved in the KRS reservoir or other reservoirs in the Cauvery basin for Bengaluru," the DyCM said responding to a question if Tamil Nadu will object to the increased allocation to Bengaluru.

Stressing the need for a plan to supply drinking water to the city keeping in mind its growth in the next 20 years, he said. P5

After deficit, recent heavy rain hits farmers

Farmers, who were facing distress due to the failure of Southwest monsoon this year that led to drought, are now facing a crisis due to heavy rain, especially in south interior Karnataka. P4





A STUNNER

An intense red-coloured rare aurora captured at Indian Astronomical Observatory in Hanle, Ladakh, on November 5 at 10.39 pm. Auroras are natural light displays over the polar regions, caused by the interaction between Earth's magnetosphere and incoming solar wind carrying magnetic fields | EXPRESS | P9

EXPRESS READ

Parl winter session likely in second week of Dec

New Delhi: The Winter session of Parliament is likely to commence in the second week of December and could conclude ahead of Christmas, sources said on Wednesday. The session, they said, could commence days after the counting of votes in five states on December 3. Some people said the session could commence even earlier. P10

Bail for Murugha Mutt pontiff in one case

Bengaluru: The Karnataka High Court on Wednesday granted bail to Dr Shivamurthy Murugha Sharanaru of Sri Jagadguru Murugharajendra Bruhanmath in one of the two cases filed against him, for allegedly sexually abusing two minor girls. The court, however, said he can't enter Chitradurga till the conclusion of both the trials. P5

Panel may recommend Moitra's termination

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

THE Lok Sabha's Ethics Committee is expected to recommend the termination of TMC MP Mahua Moitra's Parliament membership, according to sources. The panel will meet on Thursday to consider and adopt its draft report on the cash-for-query charges levelled by BJP MP Nishikant Dubey against Moitra.

The panel, headed by BJP MP Vinod Sonkar, is probing Dubey's allegations that Moitra accepted gifts and favours for asking questions in the Lok Sabha at the behest of businessman Darshan Hiranandani. It is learnt that the draft report took a serious view of the allegations and found Moitra's acts 'objectionable, unethical, and criminal'. The draft was of the view that the Trinamool MP should be given stringent punishment. The panel's recommendation will be submitted to the Lok Sabha Speaker. The House can either reject or accept the recommendations. It is also learnt that the draft report of the 15-member panel would say the matter is serious and should be probed by central agencies in a time-bound manner. P10

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